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NEWS
FROM YOUR MUSEUM
THE ROYAL ONTARIO MUSEUM

Know your Museum better

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REINDEERS, LIKE SANTA'S, LIVE IN CANADA

Do you know that reindeer, like the team that Santa Claus drives over the housetops on Christmas Eve, live in Canada? During the Ice Age, when glaciers covered Ontario, Arctic reindeer roamed through southern Canada. With the mastodon, woolly mammoth, and musk-ox, they existed along the bleak, barren borders of the great ice sheet. Today they are found placidly roving all the Arctic lands around the pole — northern Europe, northern Asia and northern North America. In Lapland, which embraces northern Sweden, northern Finland and northeastern Russa, the reindeer has been domesticated for centuries. In Arctic America the wild reindeer is called caribou. With the great reduction of Canada's caribou herds domestic reindeer have been brought in to take their place, and Eskimos are now being trained to look after herds in Canada's northland. You will see several types of caribou exhibited in the Zoology galleries of the Royal Ontario Museum.

DOES MILADY KNOW ABOUT DIAMONDS?

When the prospective bride receives her engagement ring set with the popular precious stone, diamond, what does she know about this gem except that it sparkles?

Strangely enough, the diamond, with the most brilliant lustre of all substances, and the black graphite in our "lead" pencils consist of the same element—carbon. Diamond is the hardest substance known while graphite, on the other hand, is among our softest minerals. Artificial graphite is made from anthracite in an electric furnace, but all attempts to manufacture artificial diamonds have resulted in the production of but few small stones lacking the brilliant lustre of the natural diamond.

Diamonds may be divided in a general way into two classes. These are the ordinary or "white" diamond, and the "black" diamond, also known as carbonado. The ordinary diamond has blue, yellow and other shades of colour; it is brittle and does not stand shocks as well as the black variety. Black diamonds were for a long time the only ones used in diamond drills but they come almost entirely from Brazil and their scarcity and high price have caused most drillers to turn to non-gem or "industrial" diamonds of the ordinary variety. Industrial diamonds are in great demand for diamond saws, drills, special cutting tools, dies and grinding powders. Only diamond will cut diamond.

Very few diamonds have been found in North America, and some of these in the glacial drift of the northern United States may have come from Canada. Their source has long been a mystery. In South Africa, diamonds originate in pipe-like bodies of kimberlite, a dark coloured basic rock, which is concentrated in a mill to almost an unbelievable degree. In one mine 50,000 tons of rock has been concentrated to about one cubic foot and this contains practically all the diamonds from this great quantity of rock.

Milady would enjoy a visit to the mineralogical galleries of the Royal Ontario Museum where she will see both white and black diamonds exhibited with other precious stones.

MODERN CANADIAN INDIAN HANDICRAFTS

During the month of December in the Special Exhibition Gallery of the Royal Ontario Museum of Archaeology will be displayed a travelling exhibit of modern Canadian Indian handicrafts. Under the auspices of the Canadian Handicraft Guild and sponsored by the Hudson's Bay Company and the Department of Indian Affairs, the initial exhibition was held in Montreal in June of this year. All Indian tribes in Canada were represented and the work was judged in tribal groups. The regulations required that every article be made by hand; that there be no machine stitching; that all leather must be home tanned; that all natural dyes and paints must be used; that no souvenir work or pictures be on any article. Five hundred dollars was awarded in prize money. Now the property of the Canadian Handicraft Guild, the exhibits judged best at Montreal are being shown in various cities across Canada.

DINOSAUR BONES X-RAYED

Dinosaur bones were X-rayed in Toronto the other day to discover the nature of the disease which had caused a deformity in the leg of one of these enormous creatures, about sixty-million years ago. This X-ray was suggested by Dr. J. Llewelyn Little, of the National Cancer Institute of Canada, Ottawa, in conversation with Dr. L. S. Russell, Palaeontologist at the Royal Ontario Museum. Visiting the Museum recently, Dr. Little studied the affected area on a dinosaur fibula, and thought of the possibility of bone cancer. When the radiographs were interpreted by a professional radiologist however, the opinion was given that osteomyelitis and not a malignant growth was revealed by X-ray, as having once afflicted the now fossilized fibula. This diagnosis in itself is of much scientific interest, and further research with bones of creatures roaming the earth at such a remote period is contemplated. The dinosaur skeleton with the diseased bone is one of a flesh-eating species (Gorgosaurus libratus) mounted at the Museum. Measuring approximately twenty feet from tail tip to jaw, it is twevle feet high at the head. It was collected by Mr. L. Sternberg of the Museum staff in the Belly River area of the Red Deer Valley, Alberta.

COLLECTION OF 75,000 BIRDS

Carefully stored in cabinets of an original design, catalogued with equal care and precision, there are more than 75,000 bird skins preserved at the Royal Ontario Museum. It is the most complete and most widely used collection in Canada. Accumulated through the years from donated private collections, from the endess parade of specimens secured by field surveys, and by exchange with other museums, the collection is in charge of Mr. L. L. Snyder, the Museum's Curator of Birds. It has been the background, together with extensive field work, for many of the staff publications in the realm of ornithology; and is in constant use for reference by students of the same science. It was in recognition of Mr. Snyder's scientific work and supervision in the the building up of this collection, and of his writings and research in ornithology, that he was elected a Fellow of the American Ornithological Union recently.